

SPRING 1999

NEWS BRIEF

Neighborhood Networks

U.S. Department of Housing
and Urban Development
Office of Housing-Multifamily
www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org

"Support services offered at Neighborhood Networks centers empower residents to take control of their futures and build independent, self-sufficient lives."

- HUD Secretary
Andrew Cuomo

Get Involved in Neighborhood Networks

To learn how you can participate in Neighborhood Networks efforts nationally and in your local community, contact the **Neighborhood Networks Information Center** toll-free at (888) 312-2743 or visit the website at www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org.

Support Services at Neighborhood Networks Centers Bolster Employability and Improve Lives

Neighborhood Networks centers offer a wide array of support services to help residents boost their job prospects and improve the quality of their lives. The menu of services varies from center to center. Nearly all of the approximately 460 Neighborhood Networks centers nationwide offer training in basic skills and computer competencies, along with help writing resumes and scouring job listings. After that, variety is the byword.

The range of services offered is usually determined by a consensus of the property owner, management agent and the residents, says Charles Famuliner, Neighborhood Networks' National Field Director. "What's most appropriate for North Wilkesboro, NC," he says, "may not work in Keosauqua, IA or Kahoka, MO." The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) encourages centers to use resident surveys in determining their services. Support

services are typically provided through partnerships with other federal agencies, local service providers and nonprofit agencies.

Child Care and Health Care

Child care is among the most frequently requested assistance. "The bulk of the residents of our low-income apart-

ment complexes are single mothers with children," says Famuliner. "So child care is a resounding need, even just to attend training programs at the centers." Quite a few centers have established child care on site. Others

have forged partnerships with schools and organizations, such as Head Start, to offer child care slots for free or at reduced cost to Neighborhood Networks families.

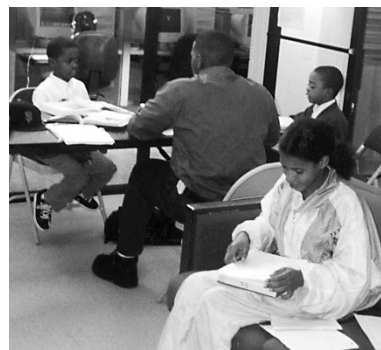
A growing number of Neighborhood Networks centers offer some form of health screenings, wellness programs and information on ailments ranging from diabetes to AIDS prevention. Many centers use computer technology to access health care

information from the Internet.

Seniors and Youth Programs

Because older residents comprise the majority at about 25 percent of the Neighborhood Networks properties, programs for seniors proliferate. Some centers focus on drawing seniors out of their apartments; others help elders develop computer skills, surf the Internet or send e-mail to grandchildren and other distant family. Health screenings and classes in nutrition, yoga and physical fitness are also favorites.

Many centers sponsor programs for school-aged children. Homework clubs are especially popular, as are field trips and classes in computers, arts and crafts, sports and dance. At the **Martin Luther King, Jr. Apartments**



One-on-one after-school tutoring at the **Jackie Robinson Computer Learning Center** in San Francisco helps students excel.

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Jobs in Cyberspace: A Denver Demonstration

The Neighborhood Networks initiative is forming an alliance with a new telecommunications demonstration project in Denver that will provide training for jobs in cyberspace. Demonstration participants will receive training to become switch installation technicians in residential, commercial or central office settings.



The demonstration is based on a model developed by Capital Commitment, Inc., a Washington, DC-based job training program that provides telecommunications training to low-income individuals. The demonstration will be run by The Enterprise Foundation, the Denver Urban League and the Community College of Denver, who plan to begin training students early in 1999.

Low-income residents across the Denver metropolitan area are eligible. Outreach and referral will be coordinated by the Denver Urban League, which will work with Neighborhood Networks centers and other community-based providers and housing authority staff to spread the word about this unique training opportunity. Minimum requirements for the Denver program - to be called Comprotech - include an 8th grade reading and math proficiency level.

Danny Perry, asset building project assistant in The Enterprise Foundation's Denver office, believes the project has the "potential for unlimited opportunities" for Neighborhood Networks center graduates.

Capital Commitment, which recently opened a new program center in Atlanta, has expressed interest in providing training to Neighborhood Networks center participants in Washington, DC and Atlanta.

For more information about Neighborhood Networks participation in the demonstration, please contact Neighborhood Networks staff Carole Norris at (415) 507-7154.

CENTER NEWSLINE

What's Happening 1, 2, 3 Years After Opening

Several Neighborhood Networks centers around the nation will have anniversaries in March. Following is a sample of the Neighborhood Networks centers nationwide with one-, two- and three-year birthdays. Celebrating its first birthday is the **Jackie Robinson Computer Learning Center** in **San Francisco, CA**. During the year the center has served more than 115 children and 52 adults and recently opened an

additional center in Bay View/Hunter's Point.

Madonna Homes Computer Learning Center in **Toledo, OH**,

is also a year old. That center recently graduated four basic computing classes. Completing its first year is **Pilgrim Place** in **Houston,**

TX, which recently graduated a 92-

year old resident from its basic computing course. One

of the center's first graduating students now

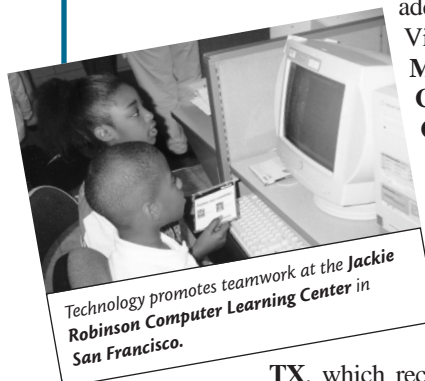
works as an instructor at the center. In

Louisville, KY, the two-year-old **Americana Community Center, Inc.** got

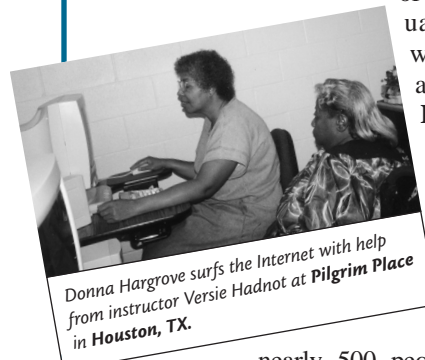
corporations to sponsor a Thanks-

giving dinner

celebration that fed



Technology promotes teamwork at the Jackie Robinson Computer Learning Center in San Francisco.



Donna Hargrove surfs the Internet with help from instructor Versie Hadnot at Pilgrim Place in Houston, TX.

nearly 500 people, including many immigrants and refugees. Now approaching its third birthday, the **Packer Computer Learning Center** in **Madison, WI**, is especially proud of its Adobe Photoshop classes. Young people who completed the course are selling logos, video productions and animation, and are being hired by the local school district to teach the graphics program to high school teachers. To learn more about center activities, call the **Neighborhood Networks Information Center** toll-free at (888) 312-2743 or visit the Neighborhood Networks website at www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org.

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in **Seattle**, children can also attend a special summer youth program. A year after the center's homework club started, participating students' grade point average had gone up from 2.6 to 2.85.

A few centers sponsor intergenerational programs linking seniors and kids. Residents of the **Arizona Retirement Home** in **Scottsdale** have mentored at-risk children in Phoenix via the Internet. Seniors read stories that the children post, write helpful comments or interact in a chat room.

Jobs and Entrepreneurship

Some centers sponsor comprehensive jobs programs to help residents get a leg up in the marketplace. In addition to computer skills, these programs teach on-the-job skills such as time management, dressing for success and how to succeed in a job interview. Quite a few centers have formed partnerships with local universities to supply college students who work with residents to strengthen basic job skills. In **Pasco, WA**, the **Tri-Cities Vista Terrace** complex operates a "little red schoolhouse" in its laundry room, with licensed instructors from the Pasco school district.

Some centers supply transportation — mostly vanpools — to help residents get to work. "If the apartment complex isn't on a bus line, which many aren't, residents can be pretty isolated," Famuliner says. "Most don't have their own transportation and rely on family and friends."

The **Operation P.E.A.C.E. (Positive Education Always Creates Elevation) Reach Out Center** in **Atlanta** uses vans from a nearby church. In **Texas**, the **Pinewood Park** housing community is developing a partnership with Al Myers Ford to provide transportation to and from work for participants in the center's welfare-to-work program.

A few centers have cut out commute time altogether by launching their own enterprises. Many

Neighborhood Networks residents are operating home-based businesses, including thrift shops, arts and crafts businesses, catering firms and temporary services. Residents of the **Villa D'Ames Learning Center** in **Louisiana** make greeting cards, fliers and business cards, press t-shirts, fashion tote bags and print church programs. This year, a \$10,000 grant from the National Council for Jewish Women enabled the center to buy a color printer, scanner and a digital camera.

Some centers target services to help immigrants adapt. At the **YWCA Apartments** in **San Francisco's Chinatown**, for example, residents can take computer classes in Chinese, Russian or English. The most popular class is Quickcode, a Chinese character word-processing software that allows the computer to pronounce words from a Chinese/English dictionary.

Navajo Culture at Rio Puerco Acres

In **Ft. Defiance, AZ**, the **Rio Puerco Computerized Neighborhood Network Center** offers a wide range of programs, including computer literacy, job training, parenting and drug rehabilitation. But the most popular offerings are those which teach residents about their own Navajo culture. A favorite course — *Changing Woman* — brings together

single mothers to build problem-solving skills. According to course leader Shirlee Yellowfeather, "the women often don't realize that they have the drive to improve their lives until they join the group."

Center Director Stewart Calnimptewa, a 21-year police veteran, has helped the residents develop crime watch patrols and has improved relations with gangs, one of which Calnimptewa recently hired to create a Navajo mural. The center also sponsors dances, social events and a newsletter.

Operation P.E.A.C.E.

Young residents at the **Bedford Pines Apartments** in **Atlanta** are learning how to run their own businesses. This past summer, 15 teens started a small clothing store in the basement.



Youth Graduation at D-Bug Computer Camp — In **Las Cruces, NM**, teens at the **Valley Neighborhood Center** have helped revitalize their 66-unit housing development and surrounding community. Through "Teens Meeting Teens," the young people organize activities including clean-ups, food distribution and drug abuse presentations. For more information, please contact the Valley Neighborhood Center directly at (505) 526-5541.

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"The kids have something positive to look forward to and earn money the right way," says Youth Coordinator Yvonne McBride.

Run by the nonprofit Operation P.E.A.C.E., the Bedford Pines center has an unusually impressive array of support services. In addition to job training and basic skills courses, residents who graduate from the center's General Equivalency Degree (G.E.D.) program can attend nearby Georgia State University, thanks to Georgia's Hope Scholarships program. The most sought-after Operation P.E.A.C.E. programs are those for Bedford Pines' children. This past summer, about 50 kids lined up at the center's doors as early as 7:00 a.m. for a full day of arts, sports and learning. During the school year, kids arrive at the center immediately after school to do homework, play games and work on computers. To make sure that kids are advancing in school, staff conferences are held with teachers, and report cards are monitored.

Wheatland Terrace

The **Wheatland Community Learning Center (WCLC)** in **Dallas** serves about 2,000 residents at five HUD-assisted and/or -insured properties. Residents use the center to access G.E.D. courses, job training and placement services and classes in computers, life skills and business etiquette. Four full-time employees work at the center, as well as one

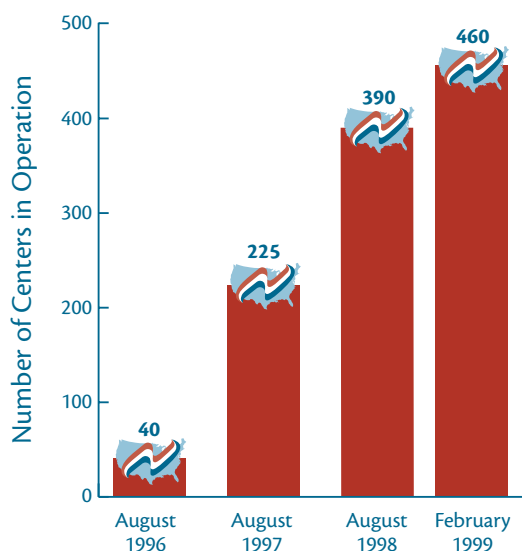
part-time AmeriCorps volunteer who conducts an after-school program. Local nonprofits are active at the center, too, including Girls, Inc. and the Child and Family Guidance Center. Nearby South Port School provides free child care spaces for participants in the Wheatland center programs. Polk-Wisdom Library, a nearby branch of the Dallas Public Library, helped organize the center's library. And film students at Mountain View Community College created a marketing video.

Job training at WCLC emphasizes working in a real office setting. Students are required to dress in business casual attire and attend a business etiquette course which equips them with business survival skills and protocols. All students are required to take a life skills course, which focuses on personal growth and development. Steven Covey's *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* is one of the reading requirements for that class.

"WCLC's goal is to graduate students who not only have the skills necessary to become self-sufficient," says WCLC Executive Director Kim Williams, "but the self-confidence and determination to remain self-sufficient."

For more information on support services at Neighborhood Networks centers, call the **Neighborhood Networks Information Center toll-free at (888) 312-2743** or visit the Neighborhood Networks website at www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org.

Neighborhood Networks Centers in Operation



Newswatch

A December story in the *San Francisco Chronicle* highlighted the grand opening of the Neighborhood Networks center at the **Prince Hall Apartments**. This new **San Francisco** center plans to open a travel agency operated by residents. In December, Baltimore's *City Paper* ran a story about the **Pedestal Gardens Neighborhood Networks Computer Training Center**. The story featured Dolores Pitts, a computer facilitator who helps residents develop skills and find jobs. Neighborhood Networks center coordinators who want help to generate news coverage should contact Neighborhood Networks staff Bill Weger at (703) 934-3208 or Lucinda Flowers at (703) 218-2621.



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Property Owner and Manager Share Vision of Neighborhood Networks Potential

An apartment owner in Chicago and a property manager in Minneapolis share a vision of what can be accomplished with a strong commitment to Neighborhood Networks.

"We thought this would be a wonderful idea for children to improve their computer skills and for adults to learn those skills," says Loretta Orme, a partner of the Illinois Parkway Gardens Associates, owner of the **Parkway Gardens** complex in **Chicago**. A Neighborhood Networks center grand opening at the 694-unit development is scheduled for Spring 1999.

Orme predicts that the center and a corresponding resident activities program will help residents access better jobs and opportunities. She envisions the center as a place where "children can practice skills learned in school on computers not available in their homes."

Ultimately, the Neighborhood Networks center is "for the benefit of the residents, not our gain," Orme continues. "It is about trying to improve the lives of the people who live at Parkway Gardens. Hopefully some will be able to move up and out."

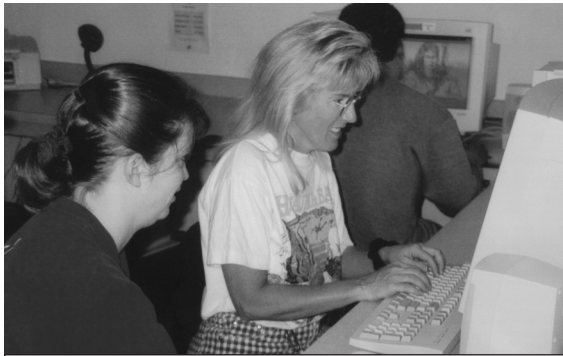
For Joe Errigo, president of CommonBond Communities, which operates the **Seward East Advantage Center** in **Minneapolis**, Neighborhood Networks offers tangible benefits. The Seward East

Advantage Center serves 813 residents. CommonBond, a 27-year-old nonprofit organization that joined the Neighborhood Networks initiative in January 1998, began operating on-site computer and resource learning centers even before HUD launched Neighborhood Networks.

"We have people moving into full-time jobs with benefits, and we have people who have become homeowners," says Errigo. "Kids are improving school performance through our mentor program." One of the most important impacts of the program, he says, is that "folks are seeing their neighbors succeed."

Errigo believes Neighborhood Networks represents an opportunity to broaden the definition of affordable housing. "It's more than bricks and mortar," he says. "Affordable housing is a stepping stone to self-sufficiency." For Errigo, and other apartment managers and owners nationwide, Neighborhood Networks is becoming a key tool in HUD's arsenal to address urban problems.

Property owners and managers who want to learn more about Neighborhood Networks can contact Neighborhood Networks staff Janet Maccubbin toll-free at (888) 312-2743 or visit the Neighborhood Networks website at www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org.

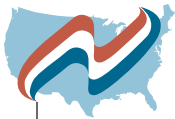


Karen Chemotti (right) expands her computer skills with the encouragement of Seward East Advantage Center staff in Minneapolis.

HUD Neighborhood Networks NEWS BRIEF

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Save the Date: 1999 National Neighborhood Networks Conference

Watch for information on the 1999 national Neighborhood Networks conference, which will be held on August 24-26 in Kansas City, Missouri.

January Center Openings

These are among the Neighborhood Networks centers that opened their doors in January 1999:

- Lilac Plaza, Spokane, Washington, January 7, 1999
- Beth Haven, Hannibal, Missouri, January 12, 1999
- Wasatch Manor, Salt Lake City, Utah, January 13, 1999
- Chancery Place, Seattle, Washington, January 14, 1999
- Emerson Place Apartments, Kearney, Nebraska, January 22, 1999
- Columbian Village, Columbus, Nebraska, January 22, 1999
- The Josephinum, Seattle, Washington, January 28, 1999



San Antonio HUD Office Holds Free Welfare-to-Work Small Business Seminar—HUD Senior Community Builder Cindy Leon (left) and Henry Cardenas (right), Chief of Economic Development of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) in San Antonio, TX, joined a group of about 100 at a welfare-to-work seminar held in San Antonio. The free seminar described initiatives such as Neighborhood Networks that help welfare recipients achieve self-sufficiency. In addition to HUD and SBA, program sponsors included the U.S. Department of Labor, the Internal Revenue Service and the Texas Workforce Commission, among others.

Visit our website at www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

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